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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2006

In Today's Papers

Ecevit to be Laid to Rest Saturday

All papers: A state funeral will be held Saturday for Turkey's former Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, who died at the age of 81 due to circulatory and respiratory failure after nearly six months in coma at a military hospital in Ankara. Milliyet reports Ecevit's wife, Rahsan, wanted to delay the funeral until the weekend to enable civil servants to participate. The government will make amendments in regulations to permit the burial of Ecevit in the state cemetery, said government spokesman Cemil Cicek following a cabinet ministers meeting yesterday. The government will also hold a special session in the parliament Tuesday to commemorate the veteran politician.

Mainstream and conservative, papers agree that Ecevit had been one of the most important political leaders of the last 50 years in Turkey. The liberal/opinion-maker Radikal says everybody -- his old and new political opponents alike -- mourns for Ecevit. The Islamist-oriented intellectual Zaman praises Ecevit for never yielding to pressure and threats, and for boldly resisting the military takeovers in 1970 and 1980. Vatan notes the fact that despite serving four terms in office, Ecevit had been Turkey's only prime minister who did not become a dollar millionaire. "Ecevit will go down in history as the poorest of all Turkish prime ministers, leaving behind four modest apartments, two inherited, and from which he did not collect any rent," Vatan says. The leftist/nationalist Cumhuriyet says before his death Ecevit was working to unify the left -- seen by the paper as the last wish of Ecevit. A commentary in the mass-appeal Sabah speculates that opposition groups would use the funeral as an opportunity to stage a secular show of force against the ruling AKP government, thus warning against current Prime Minister Erdogan's presidential ambitions.

Several papers quote State Department deputy spokesman Tom Casey as saying that "Ecevit's commitment to Turkey and its secular, democratic institutions was respected throughout the world. We

extend our sincere condolences to Mr. Ecevit's family and to the people of Turkey."

Turkey's EU Process

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet and others: In a newspaper interview, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that Turkey's standoff with the European Union over Cyprus is "very serious" for its aim of joining the bloc and Turkey should understand that there will be no way to simply "carry on" if there is no movement on Cyprus. Milliyet reports that the Cyprus disagreement with Turkey was discussed yesterday at a meeting of EU Commission officials and the officials did not suggest the suspension of accession talks with Turkey. Instead, they decided to discuss the issue before the EU leaders meeting in December. The strategy document discussed at the meeting yesterday said that the EU commission would table the necessary proposals before the summit meeting of EU leaders in December if Turkey fails to meet its responsibilities. Additionally, the EU commission warned Turkey that the course of the accession negotiations would be influenced by the Turkish failure to meet its obligations.

Hisarciklioglu Warns about Decreasing EU Support in Turkey
Sabah reports Turkish Union of Chambers (TOBB) chairman Rifat Hisarciklioglu warned Turkey and the EU regarding the alarming decrease in public support for Turkey's EU accession. "NGOs and professional organizations have not been made part of the EU entry process. Screening procedures have been carried out by the representatives of state institutions, excluding other parties," he stressed. Hisarciklioglu also said, "The EU has ignored all its pledges on Cyprus, and pursued double standards in free speech, terrorism and Armenian genocide allegations." He slammed the EU for

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remaining silent to the barring of Turkish candidates from the Dutch elections while not hesitating to meddle in Turkish judicial decisions.

Erdogan Proposes Women's Reforms to Muslim Organization

Sabah reports that Prime Minister Erdogan has sent to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) a proposal for forming a special sub-organization designed to work on reforms for women in Islamic countries. He maintained that Islam has to fight against wrong beliefs and traditions to improve the status of women. Erdogan said "Muslim Turkish women" should be represented on international platforms, in politics and in all aspects of social life. He stressed that ignorance was a major obstacle that had to be overcome, adding that his government had launched a campaign for sending girls to school in an effort to improve their status. Erdogan also noted that he was not content with the number of women in the Turkish parliament, vowing to increase the number of female parliamentarians in the next elections. Erdogan also denounced honor killings, stressing that such actions cannot be forgiven.

YASED Supports US Cargill

Milliyet reports Turkey's International Investors Association (YASED) said in a statement that the "Cargill problem" stemmed from the disagreement between the executive and judiciary mechanisms in Turkey. The statement said the closure of the Cargill plant in the Bursa province, which had been named "the best factory" among 300 Cargill plants in 2005, made other international investors in the country uneasy.

Editorial Commentary on the Saddam Death Penalty

Emin Colasan comments in the mass appeal Hurriyet: "The truth is that Saddam was a real dictator and he was brutal. Yet at the same time Iraqis, with the exception of opponents of the regime, were living safe and sound. He has now been tried by a court -- a puppet court organized by the US -- and sentenced to death. Time will show whether the verdict will be executed or not. But the main problem for Iraq remains the security of the Iraqi people. Under the Saddam regime, Iraq kept its territorial integrity to a certain degree until the US invasion which only helped bring about the loss of thousands of lives and create a division between Sunni, Shiite and Kurd. The US had better reevaluate the Iraq case considering the abyss that it is heading toward. If it was possible to ask the people of Iraq whether they would rather live in the Saddam era or

the current occupation, the answer would probably be the former in the Sunni and Shiite areas."

Melih Asik observes in the mainstream Milliyet: "There is no way for the US and the UK to present the verdict on Saddam as a fair judgment. First of all this was not a fair tribunal. Who can possibly believe that? This is a country where everything fails because of the occupation with the exception of a properly working court system. Saddam's sentence comes because of his killing of 148 Iraqis. If that makes a good case, one really wonders about the crimes of Bush and Blair. If Saddam is hanged it will not serve any purpose at all. His hanging will only accelerate the fight against the US as well as the puppet administration. The truth is a dictator genuinely dies when he is tried and hanged by his own people. But when he is hanged by others, he becomes a hero. The hanging of Saddam will add another mistake to the US account."

Fehmi Koru argues in the Islamist-opinion maker Yeni Safak: "The US was leading the trial process which started right after the occupation. However the very same US did not do anything while Saddam committed all those crimes. This is simply because when he was brutally committing crimes, he was considered to be one of the good guys by the US. He was receiving guidance from Donald Rumsfeld for instance. And, can we call it a coincidence that the court verdict was available 48 hours before the US Congressional elections? Iraq policy has become a key factor during this election and the Republicans are trying to use the verdict to argue that

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things are going well in Iraq. The truth is Iraq is suffering even more every passing day. Figures coming from independent sources are telling us that almost 3,000 Americans and 655,000 Iraqis died so far. Utterly disappointed due to growing instability, more Iraqis seem to see joining the resistance as the only option. Saddam has been sentenced to death but Iraq remains a problem."

TV Highlights
NTV (8 A.M.)

Domestic News

- Representatives of 65 NGOs in the southeastern city of Diyarbakir have released a statement saying southeast Turkey should be declared an emergency region after flash floods killed over 40 people in the mainly Kurdish region.

- On Monday, university students and NGOs staged rallies in Ankara and Istanbul to protest the 25th anniversary of the founding of Turkey's High Education Board YOK.

- Police detained 110 suspects in house raids in anti-drugs operations in the city of Sakarya near Istanbul.

- OECD Global Forum on International Investment will be held in Istanbul on November 6-7.

- Prime Minister Erdogan said communication taxes would be curbed gradually. The Turkish Telecommunication Institution expects the government to cut taxes charged from mobile phones by five points.

International News

- President Talabani said the execution of Saddam Hussein could be carried out without his signature. Iraq's court of appeals is expected to rule on the Saddam Hussein verdict by mid-January.

- EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn has welcomed Prime Minister Erdogan's pledge to revise Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, widely seen as a serious breach of free speech.

- Avigdor Lieberman, Israel's Deputy PM, said Israeli Jews and Arabs should be separated so Israel can become a homogenous Jewish country, praising Cyprus as "the best model" to follow because of the ethnic division in the island following the Turkish military

intervention in 1974.

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